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# Sustainable development and international economic cooperation: women and development

## Report of the Second Committee*

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## I. Introduction

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 97 (see A/56/560, para. 2). Action on sub-item (a) was taken at the 27th and 39th meetings, on 19 November and 11 December 2001. An account of the Committee's consideration of the sub-item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/56/SR.27 and 39).

## II. Consideration of draft resolutions A/C.2/56/L.21 and A/C.2/56/L.63

2. At the 27th meeting, on 19 November, the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Women in development" (A/C.2/56/L.21), which read:

> "*The General Assembly*,
>
> "*Recalling* its resolutions 52/195 of 18 December 1997, 54/210 of 22 December 1999 and all of its other resolutions on the integration of women in development, and also the relevant resolutions and the agreed conclusions, including those on women in the economy, adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women,

* The report of the Committee on this item will be issued in six parts, under the symbol A/56/560 and Add.1-5.

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"*Reaffirming* the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the special session of General Assembly, entitled 'Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for twenty-first century', and other recent major United Nations conferences and summits,

"*Reaffirming also* the United Nations Millennium Declaration which calls for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable,

"*Recognizing* the significant contribution that women make to the economy and the major force that they represent for change and development in all sectors of the economy, especially in key areas such as agriculture, industry and services,

"*Reaffirming* that women are key contributors to the economy and to combating poverty through both remunerated and unremunerated work at home, in the community and in the workplace and that the empowerment of women is a critical factor in the eradication of poverty,

"*Recognizing* that population and development issues, education and training, health, nutrition, the environment, water supply, sanitation, housing, communications, science and technology and employment opportunities are important elements for effective poverty eradication and the advancement and empowerment of women,

"*Recognizing also* in this context the importance of respect for all human rights, including the right to development, and of a national and international environment that promotes, inter alia, justice, equity, popular participation and political freedom for the advancement and empowerment of women,

"*Recognizing further* that education and training, particularly in business, trade, administration, information and communication technologies and other new technologies are essential for gender equality, women empowerment and poverty eradication,

"*Recognizing* that the difficult socio-economic conditions that exist in many developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, have resulted in the acceleration of the feminization of poverty and that the empowerment of women is a critical factor in the eradication of poverty,

"*Aware* that, although globalization and liberalization processes have created employment opportunities for women in many countries, they have made women, especially in developing countries and in particular the least developed countries, more vulnerable to problems caused by increased economic volatility,

"*Recognizing* that some effects of market liberalization may deepen the socio-economic marginalization of women in the agricultural sector, including through the loss of employment among small-scale farmers who are more likely to be women than men, and emphasizing that small-scale women farmers need special support and empowerment so as to be able to meet the challenges and opportunities of agricultural market liberalization,

"*Recognizing also* that enhanced trade opportunities for developing countries, including through an improved outlet access, will improve the

economic condition of those societies, including women, which is of particular importance in rural communities,

"*Aware* that, while women represent an important and growing proportion of business owners, their contribution to economic and social development is constrained by the lack of equal access between women and men to credit, technology, support services, land and information,

"*Emphasizing* the promotion of programmes aimed at financial intermediation with a view to ensuring the access of rural women to credit and to agricultural inputs and implements and, in particular, to easing collateral requirements for access to finance by women,

"*Expressing its concern* about the under-representation of women in economic decision-making, and stressing the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policy formulation, implementation and evaluation,

"*Noting* the importance of the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, in particular its funds and programmes, including the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, in facilitating the advancement of women in development,

"1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on women in development: access to financial resources: a gender perspective;

"2. *Calls* for the accelerated and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the relevant provisions contained in the outcome of all other major United Nations conferences and summits;

"3. *Stresses* that a favourable and conducive national and international environment in all fields of life is necessary for the effective integration of women in development;

"4. *Urges* Governments to develop and to promote methodologies for mainstreaming a gender perspective in all aspects of policy-making, including economic policy-making;

"5. *Recognizes* the mutually reinforcing links between gender equality and poverty eradication, as well as the need to elaborate and implement, where appropriate, in consultation with civil society, comprehensive gender-sensitive poverty eradication strategies that address social, structural and macroeconomic issues;

"6. *Stresses* the importance of developing national strategies for promoting sustainable and productive entrepreneurial activities to generate income among disadvantaged women and women living in poverty;

"7. *Urges* all Governments to ensure the equal access of women to education, training, employment, technology and economic and financial resources, including credit, in particular for rural women and women in the informal sector, and to facilitate, where appropriate, the transition of women from the informal to the formal sector;

"8. *Also urges* all Governments to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in regard to their access to bank loans,

mortgages and other forms of financial credit, giving special attention to poor, uneducated women who require proper legal assistance;

"9. *Calls upon* Governments and entrepreneurial associations to facilitate the access of young women and women entrepreneurs to education and training in business, administration and information and communication technologies;

"10. *Recognizes* the role of microfinance, including microcredit, in the eradication of poverty, the empowerment of women and the generation of employment and, in this regard, notes the importance of sound national financial systems and encourages the strengthening of existing and emerging microcredit institutions and their capacities, including through the support of international financial institutions;

"11. *Stresses* the need for international assistance to enable women in developing countries, particularly grass-roots women's groups, to have full access to and use of new technologies, including information technologies, for their empowerment;

"12. *Calls upon* Governments to encourage the financial sector to mainstream a gender perspective in their policies and programmes, in particular by:

"(a) Exploring viable venues to reach people living in poverty, in particular women, including through international public and/or private funds;

"(b) Designing savings schemes that are attractive to the poor and to poor women in particular;

"(c) Undertaking research to learn more about the characteristics, financial needs and performance of businesses owned by women;

"(d) Working towards equal treatment for women clients, through the provision of comprehensive gender-awareness training for staff at all levels, and better representation of women in decision-making positions;

"13. *Requests* Governments to ensure the full participation of women in decision-making and policy formulation and implementation at all levels so that their priorities, skills and potentials can be adequately reflected in national policy;

"14. *Calls upon* Governments to promote, inter alia, through legislation, family-friendly and gender-sensitive work environments and also to promote the facilitation of breastfeeding for working mothers;

"15. *Also calls upon* the international community to make efforts to mitigate the effects of excess volatility and economic disruption, which have a disproportionately negative impact on women, and to enhance trade opportunities for developing countries in order to improve the economic conditions of women;

"16. *Encourages* the international community, the United Nations system and relevant organizations to give priority to assisting the efforts of developing countries to ensure the full and effective participation of women in deciding and implementing development strategies and integrating gender concerns into national programmes, including by providing adequate resources to operational

activities for development in support of the efforts of Governments to ensure, inter alia, increased access of women to health care, capital, education, training and technology and full and equal participation in all decision-making;

"17. *Calls upon* developed countries to strengthen their efforts to achieve, as soon as possible, the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for overall official development assistance and, where agreed, within that target to earmark 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of gross national product for the least developed countries, so as to assist the developing countries in implementing strategies to eradicate poverty and to promote development and gender equality;

"18. *Encourages* the international community, the United Nations system, the private sector and civil society to provide the necessary financial resources to meet the development targets and benchmarks agreed upon in the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women, the twenty-third and twenty-fourth special sessions of the General Assembly and other United Nations conferences and summits;

"19. *Urges* multilateral donors, international financial institutions and regional development banks to review and implement policies to support national efforts to ensure that a higher proportion of resources reach women, in particular in rural and remote areas;

"20. *Also urges* the International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held at Monterrey, Mexico, in March 2002, to examine all aspects of financing for development from a gender perspective in order to ensure the access of women to financial resources;

"21. *Reiterates* its requests to the Secretary-General to update the World Survey on the Role of Women in Development for the consideration of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session; as in the past, this survey should focus on selective emerging development issues that have an impact on the role of women in the economy at the national, regional and international levels;

"22. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session a report on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution, including the impact of globalization on the empowerment of women and their integration in development;

"23. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-eighth session the sub-item entitled 'Women in development'."

3. At the 39th meeting, on 11 December, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Garfield Barnwell (Guyana), introduced a draft resolution entitled "Women in development" (A/C.2/56/L.63), which he submitted on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.21.

4. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.63 (see para. 6).

5. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.63, draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.21 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

# III. Recommendation of the Second Committee

6. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

## Women in development

*The General Assembly*,

*Recalling* its resolutions 52/195 of 18 December 1997, 54/210 of 22 December 1999 and all of its other resolutions on the integration of women in development, and the relevant resolutions and agreed conclusions, including those on women in the economy,[1] adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women,

*Reaffirming* the Beijing Declaration[2] and Platform for Action[3] and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly,[4] entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for twenty-first century", other recent major United Nations conferences and summits and other relevant special sessions of the General Assembly, as well as their follow-up processes,

*Reaffirming also* the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[5] which affirms that the equal rights and opportunities of women and men must be assured and calls for, inter alia, the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable,

*Reaffirming further* that gender equality is of fundamental importance for achieving sustained economic growth and sustainable development, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions and recent United Nations conferences, and that investing in the development of women and girls has a multiplier effect, in particular on productivity, efficiency and sustained economic growth,

*Recognizing* the significant contribution that women make to the economy and the major force that they represent for change and development in all sectors of the economy, especially in key areas such as agriculture, industry and services,

*Reaffirming* that women are key contributors to the economy and to combating poverty through both remunerated and unremunerated work at home, in the community and in the workplace, and that the empowerment of women is a critical factor in the eradication of poverty,

*Recognizing* that population and development issues, education and training, health, nutrition, the environment, water supply, sanitation, housing, communications,

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[1] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1997, Supplement No. 7* (E/1997/27), chap. I, sect. C.1, agreed conclusions 1997/3.

[2] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[3] Ibid., annex II.

[4] Resolutions S-23/2, annex, and S-23/3, annex.

[5] See resolution 55/2.

science and technology and employment opportunities are important elements for effective poverty eradication and the advancement and empowerment of women,

*Recognizing also* in this context the importance of respect for all human rights, including the right to development, and of a national and international environment that promotes, inter alia, justice, gender equality, equity, popular participation and political freedom for the advancement and empowerment of women,

*Recognizing further* that education and training, in particular in business, trade, administration, information and communication technologies and other new technologies, are essential for gender equality, the empowerment of women and poverty eradication,

*Recognizing* that the difficult socio-economic conditions that exist in many developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, have resulted in the acceleration of the feminization of poverty and that the empowerment of women is a critical factor in the eradication of poverty,

*Recognizing also* that poverty eradication and the achievement and preservation of peace are mutually reinforcing, and recognizing also that peace is inextricably linked to equality between women and men and to development,

*Aware* that, although globalization and liberalization processes have created employment opportunities for women in many countries, they have made women, especially in developing countries and in particular in the least developed countries, more vulnerable to problems caused by increased economic volatility,

*Recognizing* that some effects of market liberalization may deepen the socio-economic marginalization of women in the agricultural sector, including through the loss of employment among small-scale farmers who are more likely to be women than men, and emphasizing that women who are small-scale farmers need special support and empowerment so as to be able to meet the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities of agricultural market liberalization,

*Recognizing also* that enhanced trade opportunities for developing countries, including through trade liberalization, will improve the economic condition of those societies, including women, which is of particular importance in rural communities,

*Aware* that, while women represent an important and growing proportion of business owners, their contribution to economic and social development is constrained by, inter alia, the lack of equal access of women and men to and control over credit, technology, support services, land and information,

*Concerned* that the continuing discrimination against women, the denial or lack of equal rights and access to education, training and credit facilities and the lack of control over land, capital, technology and other areas of production impede their full and equal contribution to, and equal opportunity to benefit from, development,

*Emphasizing* the promotion of programmes aimed at financial intermediation with a view to ensuring the access of rural women to credit and to agricultural inputs and implements and, in particular, to easing collateral requirements for access to finance by women,

*Expressing its concern* about the under-representation of women in economic decision-making, and stressing the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of all policies,

*Noting* the importance of the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, in particular its funds and programmes, including the United Nations Development Fund for Women, in facilitating the advancement of women in development, and recognizing the work done by the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women,

*Welcoming* the fact that the Commission on the Status of Women will take up the theme of eradicating poverty, including through the empowerment of women throughout their life cycle in a globalizing world, at its forty-sixth session, in 2002,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on women in development: access to financial resources: a gender perspective;[6]

2. *Calls* for the accelerated and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration[2] and Platform for Action[3] and the relevant provisions of the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly,[4] as well as in the outcomes of all other major United Nations conferences, summits and other relevant special sessions of the General Assembly and their follow-up processes;

3. *Stresses* that a favourable and conducive national and international environment in all fields of life is necessary for the effective integration of women in development;

4. *Urges* Governments to develop and to promote methodologies for mainstreaming a gender perspective in all aspects of policy-making, including economic policy-making;

5. *Recognizes* the mutually reinforcing links between gender equality and poverty eradication, as well as the need to elaborate and implement, where appropriate, in consultation with civil society, comprehensive gender-sensitive poverty eradication strategies that address social, structural and macroeconomic issues;

6. *Stresses* the importance of developing national strategies for the promotion of sustainable and productive entrepreneurial activities that will generate income among disadvantaged women and women living in poverty;

7. *Urges* all Governments to ensure women's equal rights with men and their full and equal access to education, training, employment, technology and economic and financial resources, including credit, in particular for rural women and women in the informal sector, and to facilitate, where appropriate, the transition of women from the informal to the formal sector;

8. *Encourages* Governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and other actors of civil society to promote and protect the rights of women workers and to take action to remove structural and legal barriers as well as stereotypical attitudes to gender equality at work, and to initiate positive steps to promote equal pay for equal work or work of equal value;

9. *Urges* all Governments to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women with regard to their access to bank loans, mortgages

[6] A/56/321 and Corr.1.

and other forms of financial credit, giving special attention to poor, uneducated women, and to support women's access to legal assistance;

10. *Calls upon* Governments and entrepreneurial associations to facilitate the access of women, including young women and women entrepreneurs, to education and training in business, administration and information and communication technologies;

11. *Recognizes* the role of microfinance, including microcredit, in the eradication of poverty, the empowerment of women and the generation of employment and, in this regard, notes the importance of sound national financial systems, and encourages the strengthening of existing and emerging microcredit institutions and their capacities, including through the support of international financial institutions;

12. *Stresses* the need for assistance to enable women in developing countries, particularly grass-roots women's groups, to have full access to and use of new technologies, including information technologies, for their empowerment;

13. *Urges* States to design and revise laws that ensure that women are accorded full and equal rights to own land and other property, including through inheritance, and to undertake administrative reforms and other necessary measures to give women the same right as men to credit, capital and appropriate technologies and access to markets and information;

14. *Calls upon* Governments to encourage the financial sector to mainstream a gender perspective in its policies and programmes, in particular by:

(a) Exploring viable venues to reach people living in poverty, in particular women, including through international public and/or private funds;

(b) Designing savings schemes that are attractive to the poor and to poor women in particular;

(c) Undertaking research to learn more about the characteristics, financial needs and performance of businesses owned by women;

(d) Working towards equal treatment for women clients through comprehensive gender-awareness training for staff at all levels, and better representation of women in decision-making positions;

15. *Requests* Governments to ensure the full participation of women in decision-making and in policy formulation and implementation at all levels so that their priorities, skills and potentials can be adequately reflected in national policy;

16. *Calls upon* Governments to promote, inter alia, through legislation, family-friendly and gender-sensitive work environments and also to promote the facilitation of breastfeeding for working mothers as well as the provision of the necessary care for working women's children and other dependants;

17. *Calls upon* the international community to make efforts to mitigate the effects of excess volatility and economic disruption, which have a disproportionately negative impact on women, and to enhance trade opportunities for developing countries in order to improve the economic conditions of women;

18. *Urges* the international community, the United Nations system and relevant organizations to give priority to assisting the efforts of developing countries

to ensure the full and effective participation of women in deciding and implementing development strategies and integrating gender concerns into national programmes, including by providing adequate resources to operational activities for development in support of the efforts of Governments to ensure, inter alia, full and equal access of women to health care, capital, education, training and technology, as well as full and equal participation in all decision-making;

19. *Expresses its appreciation* to the developed countries that have agreed to and have reached the target of 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for overall official development assistance, and calls upon the developed countries that have not yet done so to strengthen their efforts to achieve the agreed target as soon as possible and, where agreed, within that target, to earmark 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of gross national product for the least developed countries;

20. *Encourages* the international community, the United Nations system, the private sector and civil society to provide the necessary financial resources to assist national Governments in their efforts to meet the development targets and benchmarks agreed upon at the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women, the International Conference on Population and Development, the twenty-third and twenty-fourth special sessions of the General Assembly and other relevant United Nations conferences and summits;

21. *Encourages* the United Nations system and international and regional organizations, as appropriate, to assist Governments, at their request, in building institutional capacity and developing national action plans or further implementing existing action plans for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action;

22. *Urges* multilateral donors, international financial institutions and regional development banks to review and implement policies to support national efforts to ensure that a higher proportion of resources reach women, in particular in rural and remote areas;

23. *Encourages* the International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held at Monterrey, Mexico, in March 2002, to examine all aspects of financing for development from a gender perspective;

24. *Encourages* Governments to integrate fully a gender perspective in their preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held at Johannesburg, South Africa, in September 2002;

25. *Calls upon* the United Nations system to integrate gender mainstreaming into all its programmes and policies, including in the integrated follow-up to United Nations conferences, in accordance with agreed conclusions 1997/2 on gender mainstreaming adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1997;[7]

26. *Reiterates its requests* to the Secretary-General to update the World Survey on the Role of Women in Development for the consideration of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session; as in the past, the survey should focus on selective emerging development issues that have an impact on the role of women in the economy at the national, regional and international levels;

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[7] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/52/3/Rev.1), chap. IV.A, para. 4.

27. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session a report on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution, including the impact of globalization on the empowerment of women and their integration in development;

28. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-eighth session the sub-item entitled "Women in development".